

MINUTES
of the
ARIZONA STATE COMMITTEE ON TRAILS
of
ARIZONA STATE PARKS
MEETING OF OCTOBER 4, 2007
Prescott Pines Camp
855 E. Schoolhouse Gulch Rd.
Prescott, Arizona

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Grandrud called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

ASCOT Members Present: Reba Grandrud, Chair
Don Applegate
Bonnie Bariola
Cate Bradley
Maureen DeCindis
Tom Fitzgerald
Dan Gruber
Carrie Miracle-Jordan
Vince Murray
Sonia Overholser
Doug Potts
Stephen Saway
Charles Scully
Linda Slay
Eric Smith
Irene Smith
Kent Taylor
John Vuolo
Erik Wilson
Bonnie Winslow

ASCOT Members Absent: Anne Ellis
Andrew Fish
Russell Freeman
Jim Horton

Arizona State Parks (ASP) Staff: Annie McVay, State Trails Coordinator
Ruth Shulman, Advisory Group Coordinator
Dan Shein, Chief of Resource Management

Guests: Mark Gullo, Flagstaff Biking Organization
Chris Hosking, City of Prescott

B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

Members and staff introduced themselves.

C. ACTION ITEMS

1. Overview of Flagstaff Biking Organization (FBO)

Mark Gullo presented details on the organization, which is active not only in biking trails, but also hiking and multi-use trails throughout the Flagstaff area. One of their many accomplishments is youth outreach, with many young people becoming involved in trail maintenance and building and scheduled rides. Another accomplishment is their “Bike to Work Day”, one of the largest in the US. In answer to Cate Bradley’s question of how ASCOT can help FBO, Mark Gullo replied that funding for trail maintenance is always needed.

2. Approval of Minutes from July 20, 2007 Meeting

Chair Grandrud asked ASCOT if there were changes to be made to the minutes as presented. There were none, and the Chair declared the minutes approved by consensus.

3. Consider Recommending State Trails System Nominations

Kent Taylor, who served as Chair to the State Trails System (STS) Nominations subcommittee, spoke on this year’s “crop” of nominations. There were 66 nominations to consider this cycle, and he commended the subcommittee on their hard work.

The first nominations for discussion were those recommended by the subcommittee for inclusion in the STS. Those included the trails submitted by Maricopa County, City of Scottsdale, City of Glendale, the Prescott Circle trails, one trail from Pinetop-Lakeside, two trails from Payson. The SR95 trail from Lake Havasu City is also recommended for inclusion; Kent Taylor said that trail would be discussed separately. (Complete details of the trails are listed in the agenda packet.)

Kent Taylor moved that ASCOT accept the subcommittee’s recommendation regarding trails to be included, excepting the Lake Havasu City SR95 trail. Maureen DeCindis seconded the motion. Bonnie Winslow asked about the number of trails broken into segments. Kent Taylor noted that many of the segmented nominations represent trails systems. Sonia Overholser said that trails system nominations have been encouraged in the past, and she recommended the Payson application as a good example. Annie McVay also noted that administratively it helps with the grant award process. Dan Gruber asked for more details on the Payson trails that engendered split votes for acceptance. Kent Taylor noted that the committee discussed the location of the trails with relation to roadways, the significance of the trails, and the “destination”. The two trails were recommended for inclusion following the discussion.

Steve Saway asked about the Goat Camp Ruin trail, which he feels has an inadequate length at .12 mile. Linda Slay replied that the trail connects to the National Forest at Payson and goes to a 10-acre historical site in the planning stages. The trail could be classified as an interpretive trail.

Don Applegate asked about whether the Glendale Thunderbird Conservation Park Trail System would be included as an entirety, or whether ASCOT is voting on each of the segments individually. Annie McVay said that the system would be included as an entirety. Bonnie Bariola noted that each segment individually could be designated as the applicable area in a grant application.

Eric Smith noted that the Prescott Circle Trail contains some segments already in the STS, and this nomination was to have the entire system recognized and included. He also noted that he would abstain from the vote on this motion in light of his employment with the City of Prescott. John Vuolo will also abstain from the vote as he works for the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside.

Chair Grandrud called for the vote, which passed unanimously but for the two abstentions.

Kent Taylor introduced discussion of the trails not recommended for inclusion in the STS. Those trails are two from Payson, and all of the trails from the Show Low application. (Complete details of the trails are listed in the agenda packet.) Kent Taylor noted that the City of Show Low was given the opportunity to provide further information about their application, however they did not do so. He then moved that ASCOT accept the subcommittee's recommendation not to include the two trails from Payson and the Show Low trail in the State Trails System. Sonia Overholser seconded the motion.

John Vuolo asked about the ownership issues with the Show Low trails. Kent Taylor said that the Fool Hollow and Willow Lake trails are located on ASP property. Annie McVay said that Fool Hollow State Park is a fee area; Show Low wanted the area to be free of charge. There are also matters of maintenance still to be worked out as well. John Vuolo asked if the Timber Mesa trails in the application might still be eligible for grants. Annie McVay noted that because of the Heritage Fund connector policy, some of the trails would still be eligible for Trails Heritage Fund grants without being included in the STS. Kent Taylor noted that the Show Low applications were poorly written, and unclear even to Show Low City staff. It was difficult for the subcommittee to determine the location of the trail, and whether some of the nominated trails were actually trails.

Bonnie Winslow asked whether the excluded Payson trails were along roadways, and whether the applications represented a system per se. Kent Taylor said that the Payson application did not seem to represent a system in the same way that the Prescott Circle Trail represented a system.

Steve Saway asked whether some of the Show Low trails could be “rescued” so as to add to the White Mountain trail system. Annie McVay said that while the application was poorly written, the reasons for excluding Show Low nomination were that many of the trails were very close to a major roadway along Highway 260 and seem to represent urban transportation corridors rather than recreational trails, which is true of Payson as well. Bonnie Bariola noted that the Show Low applications did not provide directions to reach the trails, nor clear reasons why anyone would want to use the trails. Sonia Overholser noted also that the maps provided in the Show Low application were unclear. She primarily denied the applications in that case because they were not descriptive or informative enough. Linda Slay said that the applications did not give anyone the sense that these would be trails worth traveling to.

Chair Grandrud called for the vote on the motion to exclude the Payson and Show Low trails, which carried.

Kent Taylor then opened discussion on the SR95 trail in Lake Havasu City. He noted that separate discussion of this trail seemed necessary because of the likely questions from ASCOT, as well as the Staff Recommendation put forward by Annie McVay. He said that the vote on this trail was split into three for and two against. The trail is a paved, multi-use pathway adjacent to SR95. It is detached from the roadway. The subcommittee did vote to accept the trail, and Staff expressed concerns over consistency in including the SR95, but excluding similar trails from Payson and Show Low.

Sonia Overholser moved that ASCOT accept the subcommittee’s recommendation to accept the SR95 trail into the State Trails System. Linda Slay seconded the motion. Sonia Overholser noted that an aye vote would include the trail; a nay vote would exclude the trail.

Dan Gruber asked for clarification of the committee’s rationale for accepting SR95 after rejecting similar trails. Linda Slay said that she has seen the trail that has sufficient length, connects to other parks, and provides a good experience for trails users of many stripes. Maureen DeCindis says that Lake Havasu City has few opportunities for visitors to leave their cars, so this trail is a plus. Bonnie Bariola noted that the trail is 10-12 feet wide and meanders.

John Vuolo asked whether the primary issue with this trail was that it was nearby the roadway, or whether there was a lack of existing connectivity. Annie McVay said that approving this trail would raise issues of consistency and the subcommittee’s credibility. The trail experience and connectivity mentioned as making SR95 difference could also apply to trails that were excluded. If SR95 is accepted she will need to have a concrete reason for its approval to provide to those trails that were denied. Further discussion ensued on the quality of the application itself.

Doug Potts noted that he had voted against accepting SR95 partly because of the consistency issue, and also he felt that it was unaesthetic, barren, and close to

motorized thoroughways with few barriers. He felt those issues made the trail unworthy of the STS. Annie McVay also noted that there should be a clear distinction between recreational trails and transportation enhancements.

Steve Saway asked if SR95 tied into an exterior trail system. Annie McVay said that it does. Kent Taylor said that he also noted the consistency issue at the time. He also noted that ASCOT's previous discussions on the vision of the STS did not seem to mitigate for this trail's inclusion. Further discussion followed.

Eric Smith noted that trails planner in developed areas are at a disadvantage. There may be no other trails opportunities that could be provided to Lake Havasu City. Erik Wilson asked what's the difference between this trail and the Tyler Parkway trail in Payson, which was excluded. Linda Slay replied that the Tyler Parkway could not be considered a travel destination trail, and it's too close to the road as well. Charlie Scully asked about who owns the frontage land on SR95 near the trail, and what are the odds that the land will be developed. John Vuolo said that the STS nomination form and the grant application form might be amended to discuss the odds of development vs open space around the trail. Annie McVay reiterated that she is looking for guidance from ASCOT about providing clear direction for future applicants as far as the criteria.

Dan Gruber said that the only real subjective criterion is the vision for the STS. He feels that the vision agreed upon at the July 20, 2007 meeting. The question that should be answered now is whether SR95 is significant to the STS.

Chair Grandrud called for the vote. The motion passed with 10 ayes and 8 nays.

Annie McVay said that she would still like to have direction on speaking with current applicants who were declined, and future applicants about the vision of the STS. Bonnie Winslow suggested that those who voted SR95 into the STS should provide some written input for Annie McVay.

Kudos were given to Kent Taylor and the subcommittee for the work put into the process.

4. Elect ASCOT Executive Committee Officers for 2008

Cate Bradley presented the slate of officers as agreed on at the July 20 ASCOT meeting. That slate was Bonnie Winslow for Chair, Vince Murray for Vice-Chair, Maureen DeCindis for Chair of the State Trails System subcommittee, and Irene Smith as the Chair of the Outreach subcommittee. She opened the floor to other nominations if any.

John Vuolo moved to accept the Nominations subcommittee recommendation for the Executive Committee for 2008. Doug Potts seconded the motion. Cate Bradley noted that the majority of ASCOT's work does not happen in the Executive Committee. Chair Grandrud called for the vote. The motion carried with no further discussion.

5. Trails Heritage Fund Grant Liaison Report/Update on 2007 Awarded Grants

Sonia Overholser served as the ASCOT liaison to the Trails Heritage Fund grant application rating committee for this year. There were six applications, which she named from the list appended to the agenda packet. (Copies available on request.) All applications were rated and will be funded.

Sonia Overholser noted that her goal in serving as liaison was to learn more about the funding mechanism for the grants and how the criteria were used to disburse the funds. She learned that there are two weighted components for planning, and demonstration of need for the project. These components make up approximately half the points to be awarded; the other approximate half comes from whether the project matches the priorities for trails projects as set in the Trails Plan adopted in 2005. Those applications that meet the top five priorities are weighted more heavily.

She then noted that, in the planning section, her observations were that there is 1) uncertainty as to what plans are acceptable in the application process. For example, some plans from the USFS were from 1987, which may or may not have been recent enough. Another plan did not seem to demonstrate the amount of public comment made on the plan. Her second observation was that there seemed to be some confusion about the documentation, especially letters, necessary to show the demonstration of need for the project, or public support for a project. This is another point where clarification might benefit future applicants. She then listed the top seven priorities as per the Trails Plan. Her third observation was that there should be some clarification of the differences between trails maintenance and trails renovation as eligible projects. She noted that the rating committee used a broad definition of renovation for some of these projects.

Bonnie Bariola asked about the amount of funding available for these projects. Annie McVay said that it was over \$600,000, along with a carryover from last year's budget. Doug Potts asked whether the match this year was 35/65. Annie McVay said that the match remains 50/50, which will be discussed later in the meeting. The value of volunteer labor can be counted toward the match. Dan Gruber asked if this were the first year for the new criteria. Annie McVay said that it is the second year for these criteria.

Annie McVay thanked Sonia Overholser for her work as the committee liaison.

Dan Gruber said that the review and "fine-tuning" of criteria are helped along by the comments coming from the liaison to the rating committee. Maureen DeCindis asked why there are not more applicants for Trails Heritage grants. Annie McVay noted that it may be because the match is fairly high, and that the process may be cumbersome for applicants. She noted that Bob Baldwin will be conducting a grant workshop at 4:00pm during the Trails Conference.

6. Discuss Potential December Planning Meeting

Chair Grandrud noted that December planning meetings are a tradition of ASCOT's, which usually includes the new members appointed by the ASP Board in November. The choices for this meeting are an evening meeting in Phoenix, or a meeting on a Friday or Saturday at the Horseshoe Ranch. This is a privately owned ranch in negotiation with the BLM to preserve the ranch as part of the Agua Fria National Monument. She asked for a motion.

Maureen DeCindis moved that the meeting be held at the Horseshoe Ranch. Irene Smith seconded the motion. Sonia Overholser asked whether the meeting could be on a Saturday rather than Friday. Maureen DeCindis amended the motion to include a Saturday date. Some discussion followed on the overnight nature of a Saturday meeting, and the possibility of staying at the ranch itself. The nearest community would be Cordes Junction off Interstate 17. It is necessary to cross the Agua Fria River to reach the ranch, which may provide a challenge depending on the weather.

Chair Grandrud called for the vote. The motion passed with 16 ayes and 2 nays. She called for a motion naming the specific date for the meeting. Vince Murray moved that the meeting be held on Saturday, December 1. Cate Bradley seconded the motion, which failed 5 ayes to 7 nays, with several members not voting. Bonnie Winslow moved that the date of the meeting be Saturday, December 8. Carrie Miracle-Jordan seconded the motion, which passed 12 ayes to 4 nays.

The meeting will be held on Saturday, December 8, 2007 at the Horseshoe Ranch.

D. REPORTS

1. Chair's Report

Chair Grandrud recognized the members of ASCOT whose terms expire on December 31, 2007. Those members are Don Applegate, Bonnie Bariola, Maureen DeCindis, Tom Fitzgerald, Dan Gruber, Linda Slay, Jim Horton and Eric Smith. Some of these members may be returning following the new appointments by the ASP Board based on applications. Cate Bradley noted that applications must be received from all potential candidates, including those members whose terms are expiring.

2. Member Nominations Task Force – Update on Recruiting Efforts

Cate Bradley recognized the members of the Member Nominations subcommittee: Bonnie Winslow, Bonnie Bariola (who excused herself as she is reapplying for membership), Reba Grandrud, Irene Smith, Dan Gruber and Doug Potts. This year's goal for membership is to gain representation from the USFS and rural communities. The deadline for applications has been extended to Friday, October 12, 2007 in order to take advantage of the Trails Conference attendees who may be interested in applying.

Annie McVay noted that there will be four appointments, and ASCOT's membership will be reduced to 21 for 2008. Eventually the membership will decrease to 15 total. Further discussion of the makeup of the membership followed. Volunteers with a town or other governmental agency may not apply as a government affiliate. The next subcommittee meeting will be held on October 25, 2007 at 2:00pm.

3. State Trails System (STS) Report

Report on Heritage Fund Match Decrease Issue from 2006

Kent Taylor spoke on the goal of decreasing the matching fund necessary to apply for a Trails Heritage grant. The feeling is that the current 50/50 match is too high and discourages applicants. ASCOT originally made a presentation to the Arizona Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Commission (AORCC) in February of 2006 asking for a decrease in the match. At that presentation, ASCOT asked for a 35/65 match; AORCC requested that ASCOT consider a sliding scale match based on the population size of the entity applying for the grant. ASCOT came back to AORCC with that sliding scale, which AORCC did not approve. AORCC invited ASCOT to come back in a year. ASCOT will bring this before AORCC again in 2008.

Kent Taylor feels that reducing the matching fund amount will stimulate applications and also to use the entire allocation budget to fund grant projects. This will also make the grant application process more truly competitive. Annie McVay noted that the new presentation should be made at the February AORCC meeting in 2008 for the 2009 grant cycle. At the original presentations, AORCC heard mostly from Staff, along with Kent Taylor. She feels that the trails community should be more represented as being behind the decrease.

John Vuolo said that he feels there may be other considerations besides the match to account for the lagging number of applications. In his area, it comes down to the USFS not having sufficient staff to be behind applications. He feels that the match is not the most important issue, as far as rural trails.

Annie McVay noted that the "meat" of this discussion should be held at the December planning meeting. Sonia Overholser asked that this item be specifically included on the December agenda, and that she would like to hear from past applicants about the application process. Steve Saway would also like to discuss the scope of the Heritage Funds available, and also invite trails coordinators from the various National Forests. Eric Smith noted that he does not often apply for Trails Heritage Fund grants for the urban trails he plans. He said that it has nothing to do with the Heritage Fund itself, but rather that Transportation Enhancement funds are more expansive and useful for funding expensive urban trails.

Report on Process/Timeline of STS Criteria Changes

Annie McVay also said that changes to the STS criteria should be made in time to be voted on in either December or January. She passed out copies of proposed changes (copies available on request) and went over the changes on the handout. She said that

there will be a subcommittee meeting between this meeting and the December planning meeting.

Dan Gruber said ASCOT should consider adding landowner information to the application, and also consider the meaning of the word “significant” as it applies to the STS. Annie McVay added that the application process should be easy for the applicants.

E. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

F. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS, MATTERS OF BOARD PROCEDURE, REQUESTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Irene Smith noted that on October 27, 2007 Picacho Peak State Park will host a “Hike The Peak” event as part of the ASP 50th Anniversary celebrations. Annie McVay noted an impromptu policy on pets at ASCOT meetings: please keep in mind that not all meeting spaces will welcome pets. Dan Shein asked ASCOT to provide feedback on how well Staff is working with ASCOT toward their mutual goals during the month of October 2007. Informational updates on the Trails Conference were made.

G. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

December 8, 2007; Horseshoe Ranch; time to be announced.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Grandrud adjourned the meeting at 11:50am.